

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

5 1. A method for puncturing a proximal membrane without puncturing
a distal membrane comprising:

10 distally advancing an elongated body through a first elongated tubular
member to a first position where a distal end of the elongated body is in a first
configuration outside a distal end of the first elongated tubular member, the
elongated body having a distal tip that is sufficiently rigid and sharp to puncture
the proximal membrane;

15 puncturing the proximal membrane with the distal tip of the elongated
body; and

20 advancing the elongated body distally through the punctured proximal
membrane whereby the distal tip of the elongated body moves into a second
configuration having a blunt distal surface facing the distal membrane.

25 2. A method according to claim 1 further comprising encasing the first
elongated tubular member within a second tubular member.

30 3. A method according to claim 2 wherein the first elongated tubular
member is a dilator.

35 4. A method according to claim 1 wherein the elongated body is an
elongated wire.

40 5. A method according to claim 1 wherein the elongated body is an
elongated tubular member.

45 6. A method according to claim 1 wherein the elongated body
comprises nitinol.

50 7. A method according to claim 1 wherein the first membrane is the
atrial septum and the second, distal membrane is the left atrial wall.

55 8. A method according to claim 5 wherein the distal tip of the
elongated body is cut such that the distal tip of the elongated body becomes
floppy.

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9. A method according to claim 8 wherein the cut is a spiral cut.

10. A method according to claim 8 wherein the cut is a box cut.

5 11. A method according to claim 1 wherein the distal tip of the elongated body is generally straight.

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